

NEWS



LETTER

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THE MIDDLESEX HUNT

A HISTORY BY A. HENRY HIGGINSON

By Alexander Mackay-Smith

Of the many members of the Masters of Foxhounds Association of America who have burst into print since its organization in 1907, by far the most prolific was Alexander Henry Higginson of South Lincoln, Massachusetts, founder in 1899 of the Middlesex Hunt. Together with his collaborator, Julian I. Chamberlain, he compiled two massive volumes on the (organized) Hunts of the United States and Canada, printed in 1908 and 1928. Other pairs were two books on the theory and practice of foxhunting, 1929 and 1948; two foxhunting anthologies, 1930 and 1946; and the definitive sporting biographies of two great British foxhunters, Peter Beckford and Squire Farquharson (1937, 1936) in addition to three small volumes devoted to foxhunting fiction (1939, '44, '45). Mr. Higginson also compiled the very useful "British and American Sporting Authors," 1949. His final pair were two sporting autobiographies, namely "Try Back: A Huntsman's Reminiscences" (1931) and "An Old Sportsman's Memories 1876-1951" (1951). The number of his articles and letters contributed to sporting periodicals, such as *The Field*, *Horse and Hound*, and *The Chronicle of the Horse*, was legion.

As for his own career Mr. Higginson had much to write about. Besides founding the Middlesex Hunt in 1899, he instituted the first national hound show at his South Lincoln, Mass. kennels on May 26, 1906; compiled and edited the first five volumes of the M.F.H. Association's Foxhound Kennel Stud Book; served as President of the Association from 1915 to 1931 when he went permanently to live in England, becoming Master of the Cattistock Hunt; and from 1919 to 1931 was also Chairman of the Hunts Committee of the National Steeplechase and Hunt Association, a period when that body, (instead of the M.F.H.A.) granted or refused recognition to individual hunts.

Mr. Higginson was a meticulous record keeper. At the end of each day he settled down with his portable typewriter and pecked out for his sporting diary its most notable happening. He also kept manuscript personal diaries. Throughout his lifetime, he was a pronounced Anglophile, preferring everything English, particularly foxhounds. This preference (and his distaste for American hounds) was demonstrated early, in November 1905, when, in Virginia's Piedmont country (Loudoun and Fauquier counties), he contested a match between his English hounds and the American (Virginia) hounds of his Massachusetts neighbor and rival, Harry Worcester Smith, M.F.H., the Grafton Hunt. At Mr. Higginson's death in 1958 his library contained virtually everything published on foxhunting in the British Isles, but nothing on American foxhunting. His two autobiographies are the same—almost nothing about the Middlesex pack other than

their record in the classes for English hounds under English judges at hound shows. His manuscript personal diaries of sport in England, by mistake following his death sold at auction at his British residence, Stinsford House in Dorset, have been retrieved and are now in the Boston Athenaeum, but the present whereabouts of his personal American sporting diaries is unknown.

This important gap in the history of American foxhunting can now be filled, however, thanks to the generosity of Mr. Thomas Marston, long connected with rare books at Yale, and a Director of the National Sporting Library. Mr. Marston has recently presented to the N.S.L. three big typewritten volumes, bound in green cloth, illustrated with original photographs, some 1700 pages in all, with "A. Henry Higginson" inscribed on the fly leaves and entitled "A History of the Middlesex Hunt," Vol. I 1899-1910, Vol. II 1911-1916, Vol. III 1917-1926. During this 27 year period the sport of every hunting day is set forth in detail, both in the cubbing and in the regular seasons. There are hound lists for each year, giving names, year of entry and parents, and similar data is included for Mr. Higginson's numerous and frequent importations of hounds from England. The judges and the awards at the hunt's puppy shows from August 31, 1901 are given and also the winnings of the Middlesex in the classes for English hounds at their own national hound show, beginning in 1906; at the Westminster Kennel Club show beginning in 1901; and at the Bryn Mawr Hound Show beginning in 1914. The placings in the Middlesex Hunt's horse shows (from 1900) and steeplechase meetings (from 1901) are detailed. The hiring and dismissal of



Left to right: J. I. Chamberlain, A. H. Higginson, Tom Wilson (drag-boy), 2nd Whipper-in, and Arthur Paley, 1st Whipper-in and Kennel Huntsman.

hunt servants (almost all British) are set forth, together with comments on their good and bad points. These volumes not only reveal a wealth of detail about the Middlesex—probably the most complete surviving record of any American hunt—but also are perhaps even more important because of the information they contain about other hunts visited by the pack and by its Master, as will be seen below.

Mr. Higginson commenced operations in 1899 in the country about South Lincoln, Mass., with a drag pack of beagles followed on horseback. In the summer of 1903 he replaced these with larger hounds, not only with English foxhounds, but also with a draft of British harriers from the Brookside pack. At the conclusion of the Westminster Kennel Club Show the following February (1904), being dissatisfied with the quality of his own hounds in comparison with other packs of English hounds exhibited, notably the Brandywine and the Genesee Valley, Mr. Higginson secured the entire draft of entered hounds from the Fernie in England, importations in later years coming from this pack, from the Southdown, the Essex Union, Mr. Salkeld's, the Fitzwilliam, the North Warwickshire, the Brocklesby and the Duke of Beaufort's. At the close of the autumn season (Nov. 10th, 1904) he decided to try foxhunting, dividing his hounds into a drag pack and a foxhunting pack. The former was given up following the spring drag hunting season of 1907 (May 24th). In the spring of 1916, keeping abreast of current developments in Britain, he introduced Welsh strains into the pack, by importing a number of hounds from Sir Edward Currie's at Itton Court.

Volume I records the much publicized match in Fauquier and Loudoun counties (Va.) held November 1 to 14, 1905 between the English hounds of the Middlesex pack and the American hounds of Harry Worcester Smith's Grafton pack, the latter secured mostly from B. F. Bywaters of nearby Rappahannock county. Since the judges awarded the John R. Townsend cup to Mr. Smith it is understandable that Mr. Higginson's remarks were limited to a laconic account of the six days when his hounds were in the field. The history, perhaps unintentionally, does reveal what had previously been passed over—the disadvantages under which the English hounds labored. At the time the match was made, early in 1905, these hounds had hunted, on this side of the Atlantic, only a chance found fox or two, and at the time the match took place only a short three months in the very different terrain and climate of eastern Massachusetts.

The Middlesex hounds and staff nevertheless made such a favorable impression that the following season, (Nov. 2 to Jan. 11), they were invited to hunt the nearby (Va.) Loudoun country by Westmoreland Davis of "Morven Park" and by William Corcoran Eustis of "Oatlands" where the Virginia Foxhound Club Hound Show is now held annually. This was the first of a series of invitations, issued over the next ten years to Mr. Higginson to hunt his



A. Henry Higginson, M.F.H. Middlesex Hunt (1899-1926) South Lincoln, Mass.

hounds in countries other than his own. He went back to the Loudoun country the next year (Oct. 18 to Jan. 29th, 1908); to the Shelburne, Vermont, country of J. Watson Webb, M.F.H. in 1911 (Oct. 4th to Dec. 30) and 1912 (Oct. 21 to Nov. 15); to the Millbrook, (New York) country in 1913 (Oct. 7 to Dec. 13), in 1914 (Oct. 19 to Dec. 4) and in 1915 (Oct. 28 to Dec. 13); to the Harford (Maryland) in 1916 (Oct. 31 to Jan. 9); and back again to Millbrook (Oct. 17 to Dec. 6th). From 1911 to 1917 Mr. Higginson was ably assisted by Charlie Morris (imported from England's Bads-worth Hunt) as Kennel Huntsman, 1st whipper-in and Huntsman, undoubtedly his outstanding hunt servant, who left to become Huntsman of the Toronto and North York pack in Canada. During this period the Middlesex pack was taken for occasional days in other hunting countries—the Meadow Brook, Long Island (Nov. 19 & 21, 1912); the Myopia, Massachusetts (Oct. 8 & 10, 1915); and the Radnor, Pennsylvania, (Nov. 20, 22, & 24, 1916).

Obviously there was just one reason for this series of invitations—Messrs Higginson, Morris and their hounds showed superlative sport, even in strange countries. Detailed accounts of just what the Middlesex hounds did on over a thousand hunting days are contained in these volumes. Mr. Higginson was conservative and realistic in assessing a day's sport. Obviously the rather cramped Middlesex home country could not produce the great gallops characteristic of such open countries as the Loudoun, Harford and Millbrook. Only once did A.H.H. call a day at home "great," but he did bestow this honor on several historic days with the Loudoun, Shelburne, Millbrook and Harford, accounts of which, beautifully and stirringly written from the viewpoint of a dedicated hound man, are calculated to raise the short hairs on the backs of every true foxhunter's neck.

After the 1917-1918 season and the departure of Charlie Morris, Mr. Higginson decided to give up his hounds—he had sold most of his dog hounds early in 1917 to W. Plunket Stewart, Master of the Cheshire in Pennsylvania—even though early in the autumn of that year the entire Genesee Valley (N.Y.) pack of Major Austin Wadsworth's came as a gift to the Middlesex kennels. Consequently there is a gap in Vol. III until the season 1920-24 when Mr. Higginson agreed to act as Hon. Huntsman to Mr. Oakleigh Thorne's Millbrook pack, Millbrook, N.Y., hunting both hares and foxes. Harry Andrews, later to become Kennel Huntsman of the Genesee Valley pack, acted in that capacity and as 1st Whipper-in to the Millbrook. In practice he seems to have hunted hounds most of the season, Mr. Higginson appearing only on a couple of occasions. During the following season (1922-23) Mr. Higginson was listed as Hon. Huntsman of the foxhound pack, and Harry Andrews as Huntsman of the harrier pack.

Volume III continues with 130 typewritten pages under the title "The Wanderings of Two Sportsmen in Search of Adventure in the Hunting Fields of the East, October and November 1923." The second sportsman was Henry Perry—Mr. Higginson did all the writing. The wanderers seemed to know where they were going and did themselves pretty well—enough good hunters for first and second horses four or five days a week, accompanying grooms and a second horseman, plus a valet for their hunting clothes. Their hosts were fellow foxhunters who provided every luxury and the best of company, male and female. During the autumn of 1923 they hunted 6 days with Mr. Stewart's Cheshire, 2 with the Brandywine and 3 with the Radnor, all in Pennsylvania. Moving to Maryland and the Harford Hunt club house they had 14 days with that pack, hunted by Joint Master Frank Bonsal, plus four more days in that country with visiting packs, 3 with the Meadow Brook and 1 with the Elkridge. On November 22, Mr. Higginson wrote Mr. Stewart a most interesting 10 page letter, in effect a critique of the packs with which he had hunted.

The same pair made a similar tour in the autumn of 1924—5 days with Mr. Stewart's Cheshire, including 1 with its American pack(!) of which Mr. Higginson was rather complimentary. The rest of the season was divided between 2 with the Brandywine; 2 (while judging hunters at the Royal Winter Fair) with the Toronto and North York, Charlie Morris carrying the horn; and 15 in the Harford country, 6 with Mr. Bonsal hunting hounds, 4 with the Elkridge and 2 with the Green Spring Valley. Mr. Bonsal died suddenly of pneumonia following a fall, so Mr. Higginson hunted the Harford Hounds during the last 3 days of the season—Dec. 5, 10, and 17.

Because of this success he was invited by Mrs. W. Goadby Loew, M.F.H. to come to Harford as Joint Master and Hon. Huntsman for the 1925-26 season, a most

difficult task considering the then hunting abilities of the pack. With the help of drafts contributed by the Masters of other packs and a good hunt staff, Mr. Higginson nevertheless was able to show very tolerable sport, including two days (Oct. 29 & Nov. 12) which he recorded as "good." Joint Masterships were not Mr. Higginson's cup of tea, however, and on Feb. 1, 1926, he submitted his resignation, bringing the book to a close.

Mr. Higginson took great pains to carry out his duties as a Master of Foxhounds with complete correctness in the British manner—a viewpoint consistently manifested in the over 1700 pages of the 3 volumes. He was not always the pukka pukka M.F.H., however—he had a keen sense of humor and could laugh at himself. The following is extracted from the era when the young Middlesex pack was experiencing growing pains:

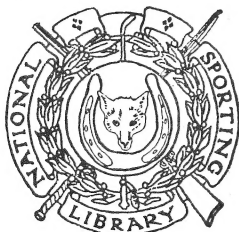
Saturday—April 5, 1903

"The Master's temporary confinement to his room with a slight attack of measles necessitated the hunting of hounds by James Grace, the 1st Whipper-in. Cast in on the Cherrycroft Farm, hounds ran a good clip over the Trask and Warner farms to the Kennels where they flashed over the line and ran down a wood-road toward 'The Meadows', hotly pursued by Hunt servants, and past the Field, in spite of frantic entreaties to 'old 'ard. Being finally headed within sight of the bedridden Master's window, he was with difficulty restrained by the nurse from going down stairs, and had to content himself with howling anathemas at his men and with orders to use the horn, which they seemed unable to do. Hounds were finally turned back, and, picking up the line at the edge of the wood, gave the Field a good gallop over the Blodgett meadows to Lincoln Station, where they ran into the drag-boy."

Just why Mr. Higginson was reluctant to publish accounts of at least the great hunts accomplished by his hounds is not clear—other foxhunters of his day such as J. Stanley Reeve, found a wide and appreciative audience for their hunting diaries in print. Mr. Higginson was perhaps more modest. At the end of Volume I he wrote (p. 592):—

"This brings the year of 1910 to a close and — it seems to me, a fitting place to bring this series of records (which probably few beside myself will ever read) to a close."

Visitors to the National Sporting Library, however, will find that these three volumes on the Middlesex Hunt make very good reading indeed.



J. S. SKINNER, EDITOR AND FOUNDER AMERICAN TURF REGISTER AND SPORTING MAGAZINE

By Lynne Kindersley Dole

John Stuart Skinner terminated his editorship of the American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine with the issue of August 1835, the end of the sixth year of its publication. By providing a repository for information pertaining to breeding and performances he had rendered a service of inestimable value for the advancement of the American Thoroughbred horse.

Prior to and during the early stages of the A.T.R., records of breeding and pedigrees were often poorly kept, sometimes only in the memory of an owner who never committed his knowledge to paper. There being no central collection point for dissemination of authenticated pedigrees, these were often passed by word of mouth or through individual correspondence, gathering errors or embellishments along the way. A spurious pedigree left unchallenged became fact down through the years. It was a haphazard situation, detrimental to the breeding of the American Thoroughbred, and in consequence too much reliance was placed upon the imported horse, registered in the English General Stud book, some of which did not deserve the merit accorded to them.

The American Turf Register, in publishing pedigrees and performances, not only acted as a permanent record, but also, in exposing them to public scrutiny, allowed opinions and corrections to be made

regarding them. As Mr. Skinner pointed out, "The longer we remain without such a register, the more difficult will it be to trace the pedigrees of existing stock." (Sept. 1829, I, p.1) This was Mr. Skinner's first great contribution to the American Thoroughbred.

Second in importance was his effort to establish a conformity of rules and regulations governing the various jockey club races throughout the country. Before A.T.R. was founded, race courses were of any length that suited the terrain, the weights carried varied considerably from one course to the next. Mr. Skinner, in conjunction with other Maryland sportsmen, drew up explicit rules and regulations for the Maryland Jockey Club. By the end of his tenure as editor, jockey clubs were substituting these for their previous rules. Reportage of races, under Mr. Skinner's direction, came to include the owner, color, name, sire, dam and age of each contender, the tracks were surveyed and adjusted to a measured mile, and standard weights for age assigned. At last it became possible to assess the relative performances and times run by horses in different parts of the country. Mr. Skinner noted, "By means of its (A.T.R.) pages every Thoroughbred horse becomes as well known at the farthest extreme of the union as he can be in his immediate vicinity." (Sept. 1834, VI, p.38)



John Stuart Skinner, Editor and Founder of The American Farmer 1819, The American Turf Register 1829.

(Drawn by J. Wood, 1825)

Subscribers and breeders were not insensible to the benefits to be derived from A.T.R. One subscriber says, "You have done more to raise the price of blooded stock of the United States than all other people in it collectively, and except for the great exertions you have made and the influence of the Turf Register, the owners of stallions could not stand their horses at present prices." (Sept. 1834, VI, p.38) In further recognition and in order to express their gratitude, a group of sportsmen covering an area extending from South Carolina to New York banded together to contribute to the purchase of a dinner service of plate presented at a dinner party in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Skinner. Their tribute reads, "In affording to the public an official and authentic register of the pedigree and performances of the racehorse, you have provided means of security against imposition. Since the establishment of the Register, property in thorough-bred horses has been more than doubled in value, whilst the sports of the turf, the only adequate test of superiority, have been better and more uniformly regulated; extending and rising in the public estimation, as they have been improved in the rules and style of conducting them....Near witnesses of your zeal, industry and impartiality, it gives us pleasure to be the medium of paying a compliment so well deserved." (Dec. 1833, V, p.200)

Mr. Skinner must have had a very likeable personality. His wide interest and knowledge of many different sports gave him an entree wherever he went. There was no more welcomed a visitor than he - subscribers enjoined him to come to their part of the country to partake of their sporting opportunities, whether it was foxhunting, shooting, fishing or racing. In addition he was the recipient of numerous gifts - foxhounds, pointers and setters from England, Persian gazehounds from Constantinople, partridges from Chile. Of more doubtful use was the presentation of Chinese edible dogs, though Mr. Skinner assured his readers that they would not be part of the menu until the breed was well established. President Andrew Jackson presented Mr. Skinner with a fine cream colored greyhound, and he was the recipient of a Newfoundland brought from Labrador by John James Audubon.

A little known fact is that Mr. Skinner might have prevented the burning of the Capitol and White House during the War of 1812 had the authorities listened to his warning. We read that, "Commodore Barrie (was) the most hardy, resolute, enterprising and mischievous of the British officers that harbored in the Chesapeake bay during the war. It was he who first ascended the Patuxent river, nearly to Nottingham, about the month of July, in 1814 - ascertained the defenceless condition of the capital of the union, and declared, in his despatch to Admiral Cockburn, that if he had four thousand men he would have then captured the seat of the United States' government. On the 12th day of July the Editor of this

Magazine rode eighty miles on horseback; and from Annapolis, that night, warned the government of the danger of being taken by a coup de main. No preparation was made; and on the 24th of the next month the capitol was burned. Admiral Cockburn observed afterwards to the writer of this (Skinner), who was condemning that conflagration as without legitimate purpose or end, and against the usages of civilised warfare, that he and General Ross, in approaching the capitol, had halted opposite Mr. Gallatin's old residence, deliberating on horseback, as to what should be done, (General Ross, it is believed, being opposed to the burning) when Ross' horse was shot under him, long after all show of opposition had ceased, by a person from the house before mentioned, which put an end to deliberation, and decided the fate, not only of the house itself, but of the capitol and president's house." (Jan. 1834, V, p.225)

Mr. Skinner's philosophy is stated in his introduction to the American Turf Register, "The physical capacity to cherish and rear our families, and the resolution to peril our lives in defense of political and religious freedom, is as certainly invigorated and heightened by the occasional exhilaration of the mind and spirits, as the elasticity of the bow is maintained by frequent relaxation." (Sept. 1829, I, p.2) Sporting interests serve the same purpose today as then.

RECENT DONATIONS TO THE NATIONAL SPORTING LIBRARY

The library has received a large number of books, manuscripts and works of art in the past few months from: Thomas Marston, Baylor Hickman, Francis Thornton Greene, Brig. Gen. and Mrs. J. L. Collins, Mrs. Charles Weeden, III, the estate of the late Mrs. Parker Poe, Peter Winants, Lida Fleitmann Bloodgood, Alexander Mackay-Smith, The Chronicle of the Horse, The Virginia Horse Council, United States Pony Clubs, Inc., and Cornell University Library of Veterinary Science.

Of particular interest are Mr. Marston's gifts of SPORTING, edited by Nimrod and embellished with large engravings and vignettes illustrative of British Field Sports, published in 1838; and a HISTORY OF THE MIDDLESEX HUNT by A. Henry Higginson, M.F.H. in three volumes; Alexander Mackay-Smith's collection, 232 volumes on sporting art; Brigadier General and Mrs. Collins' CHERISHED PORTRAITS OF THOROUGHbred HORSES by W. S. Vosburgh; Mr. Hickman's gift of THE SOUTH CAROLINA JOCKEY CLUB, by Dr. John B. Irving; Mr. Greene's rare copies of J. S. Skinner's THE DOG AND THE SPORTSMAN (as well as personal letters and documents belonging to J. S. Skinner); and from the estate of the late Mrs. Parker Poe the first

edition with hand colored engravings, of Richard Blome's GENTLEMAN'S RECREATION (1686). Mrs. Bloodgood contributed additional materials to the collected papers and articles of Piero Santini.

In addition to financial support the library always welcomes any gifts of sporting materials - including books, magazines, catalogues, diaries, records, scrapbooks, and manuscripts. The library's collection continues to prove extremely helpful to scholars in their research as well as to devotees interested in sport.

LIBRARY DUES

Accompanying the June issue of the National Sporting Library Newsletter is a request for the Annual Membership contribution to the Friends of the National Sporting Library Association. We hope that you have enjoyed our Newsletters and that you will continue to support the Library through your tax deductible gifts. We feel that the National Sporting Library, the only public library of its kind, fills a real need—not only in collecting and preserving the literature of sport, but also in serving as a research center for scholars and all those who enjoy reading and learning about their favorite sports.

If you have not yet made your annual contribution, we urge you to do so, and also to tell your friends about the scope and purpose of the National Sporting Library. We shall be glad to send a complimentary copy of the newsletter to anyone who is interested in sport and sport history.

NATIONAL SPORTING LIBRARY RESEARCH

An increasing number of researchers and scholars have used the Library's resources during the past months in widely varying searches. They include a writer preparing a history of the Front Royal Remount Depot; an historian researching early foxhunting; a newspaper reporter gathering information for an article on travel; students doing research papers on horse anatomy, combined training, tack, hare hunting, and early Scottish hunting ballads. People in the horse industry continue to use the Library for produce records, hunter sales, and current methods of horse management. Examples of the numerous requests for information by mail and telephone include identifying a horse in an early racing print; the name, time and statistics of the winner of the 1857 Pineville Race Meet; information on types of carriages; reference material on the historical development of bits; and articles on Equestrian Events at the 1936 Olympic Games.

We are pleased to report that in every instance the Library has been able to supply the requested information.

* * *

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LIBRARY STAFF CHANGES

June Ruhsam resigned as librarian in May in order to devote more time to her farm where she raises purebred Angus cattle and Thoroughbred horses. She also hopes now to have more time to enjoy her favorite pastime of riding and foxhunting. The new librarian will be Judith Ozment, who had been the assistant librarian working with Mrs. Ruhsam.

The new assistant librarian is Belle Cohen who comes from the U.S. Office of Education, where she served as a specialist in the education of handicapped children. Since her husband's retirement from military service, the Cohens have been Middleburg residents and foxhunt regularly with the local packs.

COL. ALBERT P. HINCKLEY JOHN S. PETTIBONE, SR.

We are sad to report the loss of two of the National Sporting Library's faithful supporters. Col. Albert P. Hinckley died on March 9 at "Henchman's Lea," Orlean, Virginia following a long illness. A native of Massachusetts, Col. Hinckley moved to Virginia following World War II. An avid foxhunter, Col. Hinckley was either MFH or Jt-MFH of the Old Dominion Hounds for twenty-one years, from 1947 to 1968.

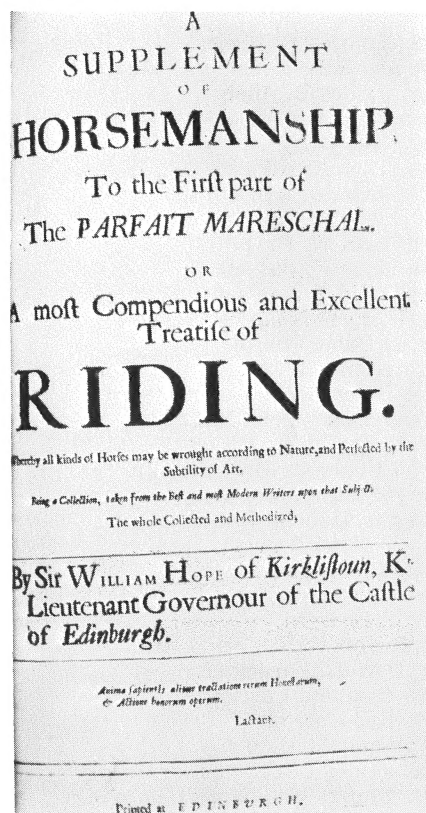
Mr. John S. Pettibone, Sr., died May 11 at Middleburg, Virginia. Mr. Pettibone was well known in the horse show world as the owner of the Duke of Paeonian, three times winner of the conformation hunter championship at Madison Square Garden.

FRIENDS OF THE N.S.L.

Since the publication of our last newsletter in December, 1978, the following individuals have become Friends of the National Sporting Library: General and Mrs. J. L. Collins, Mr. J. Rieman McIntosh, Maj. Gen. Frank W. Norris, Mrs. Charles Weeden III, and Col. W. W. West III. The Library welcomes the interest and support of these new members.

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'LE PARFAIT MARESCHAL'
The 17th century was the century of France, of Louis XIV, "Le Roi Soleil." By

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LIBRARY STAFF

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the same token the great veterinary book of the century, "Le Parfait Mareschal," was written by a Frenchman, Jacques de Solleysel (1617-1680), an Ecuyer at the King's Grande Ecurie. First published in Paris in 1664, it was translated into many languages, published in almost countless editions, passages from which were reproduced to a large extent into the 19th century. Mention of de Solleysel was made in our June 1977 Newsletter regarding his translation into French (1677) of the Duke of Newcastle's treatise on equitation "A New Method and Extraordinary Invention to Dress Horses" (1657, 1667).

The sixth edition of "Le Parfait Mareschal" was published in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1677 accompanied by a German translation. To this was added "Abrege de l'Art to Monter a Cheval" (Summary of the Art of Riding) written by "un des plus habiles Ecuyers de ce temps" (one of the most accomplished Riding Masters of to-day). F. H. Huth ("Works on Horses and Equitation, 1887, p.22) identified the author as Baron d'Eisenberg, which seems improbable as the latter must have been far too young to have written such a treatise in 1677 (d'Eisenberg's first book was published in London in 1727 and he was still living in 1764).

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